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THE THOMPSON SETON READERS

LITTLE WARHORSE

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SILVER FOX

MONARCH

THE SLUM CAT

LITTLE WARHORSE

THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE REINDEER

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CONSTABLE LONDON

LITTLE WARHORSE

THE HISTORY OF A JACK-RABBIT

AND

BADLANDS BILLY

BY

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"ROLF IN THE WOODS," "TWO LITTLE SAVAGES," "ANIMAL HEROES," "THE BOOK OF WOODCRAFT," ETC.

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LITTLE WARHORSE

THE HISTORY OF A JACK-RABBIT

I

The Little Warhorse knew practically all the Dogs in town. First, there was a very large brown Dog that had pursued him many times, a Dog that he always got rid of by slipping through a hole in a board fence. Second, there was a small active Dog that could follow through that hole, and him he baffled by leaping a twenty-foot irrigation ditch that had steep sides and a swift current. The Dog could not make this leap. It was "sure medicine" for that foe, and the boys still call the place "Old Jacky's Jump." But there was a Greyhound that could leap better than Jack, and when he could not follow through a fence, he jumped over it. He tried the Warhorse's mettle more than once, and Jacky only saved himself by

his quick dodging, till they got to an Osage hedge, and here the Greyhound had to give it up. Besides these, there was in town a rabble of big and little Dogs that were troublesome, but easily left behind in the open.

In the country there was a Dog at each farm-house, but only one that the Warhorse really feared; that was a long-legged, fierce, black Dog, a brute so swift and pertinacious that he had several times forced the Warhorse almost to the last extremity.

For the town Cats he cared little; only once or twice had he been threatened by them. A huge Tom-cat flushed with many victories came crawling up to where he fed one moonlight night. Jack Warhorse saw the black creature with the glowing eyes, and a moment before the final rush, he faced it, raised up on his haunches,—his hind legs,—at full length on his toes,—with his broad ears towering up yet six inches higher; then letting out a loud

hurrr-churrr, his best attempt at a roar, e sprang five feet forward and landed on he Cat's head, driving in his sharp hind ails, and the old Tom fled in terror from he weird two-legged giant. This trick he ad tried several times with success, but wice it turned out a sad failure: once, hen the Cat proved to be a mother whose Kittens were near; then Jack Warhorse ad to flee for his life; and the other time as when he made the mistake of landing ard on a Skunk.

But the Greyhound was the dangerous nemy, and in him the Warhorse might ave found his fate, but for a curious dventure with a happy ending for Jack.

He fed by night; there were fewer nemies about then, and it was easier to ide; but one day at dawn in winter he ad lingered long at an alfalfa stack and as crossing the open snow toward his avourite form, when, as ill-luck would ave it, he met the Greyhound prowling utside the town. With open snow and

growing daylight there was no chance to hide, nothing but a run in the open with soft snow that hindered the Jack more than it did the Hound.

Off they went—superb runners in fine fettle. How they skimmed across the snow, raising it in little *puff—puff—puffs*, each time their nimble feet went down. This way and that, swerving and dodging, went the chase. Everything favoured the Dog,—his empty stomach, the cold weather, the soft snow,—while the Rabbit was handicapped by his heavy meal of alfalfa. But his feet went *puff—puff* so fast that a dozen of the little snow-jets were in view at once. The chase continued in the open; no friendly hedge was near, and every attempt to reach a fence was cleverly stopped by the Hound. Jack's ears were losing their bold up-cock, a sure sign of failing heart or wind, when all at once these flags went stiffly up, as under sudden renewal of strength. The Warhorse put forth all his power, not to reach the hedge

o the north, but over the open prairie astward. The Greyhound followed, and vithin fifty yards the Jack dodged to foil is fierce pursuer; but on the next tack e was on his eastern course again, and o tacking and dodging, he kept the line irect for the next farm-house, where was a ery high board fence with a hen-hole, nd where also there dwelt his other hated nemy, the big black Dog. An outer hedge elayed the Greyhound for a moment and ave Jack time to dash through the hen-ole into the yard, where he hid to one ide. The Greyhound rushed around to he low gate, leaped over that among the Iens, and as they fled cackling and flutter-ng, some Lambs bleated loudly. Their atural guardian, the big black Dog, ran o the rescue, and Warhorse slipped out gain by the hole at which he had entered. orrible sounds of Dog hate and fury were eard behind him in the hen-yard, and oon the shouts of men were added. How ended he did not know or seek to learn,

but it was remarkable that he never afterward was troubled by the swift Greyhound that formerly lived in Newchusen.

II

Hard times and easy times had long followed in turn and been taken as matters of course; but recent years in the State of Kaskado had brought to the Jack-rabbits a succession of remarkable ups and downs. In the old days they had their endless fight with Birds and Beasts of Prey, with cold and heat, with pestilence and with flies whose sting bred a loathsome disease, and yet had held their own. But the settling of the country by farmers made many changes.

Dogs and guns arriving in numbers reduced the ranks of Coyotes, Foxes, Wolves, Badgers, and Hawks that preyed on the Jack, so that in a few years the Rabbits

were multiplied in great swarms; but now Pestilence broke out and swept them away. Only the strongest—the double-seasoned—remained. For a while a Jack-rabbit was a rarity; but during this time another change came in. The Osage-orange hedges planted everywhere afforded a new refuge, and now the safety of a Jack-rabbit was less often his speed than his wits, and the wise ones, when pursued by a Dog or Coyote, would rush to the nearest hedge through a small hole and escape while the enemy sought for a larger one by which to follow. The Coyotes rose to this and developed the trick of the relay chase. In this one Coyote takes one field, another the next, and if the Rabbit attempts the "hedge-ruse" they work from each side and usually win their prey. The Rabbit remedy for this, is keen eyes to see the second Coyote, avoidance of that field, then good legs to distance the first enemy.

Thus the Jack-rabbits, after being successively numerous, scarce, in myriads, and

rare, were now again on the increase, and those which survived, selected by a hundred hard trials, were enabled to flourish where their ancestors could not have outlived a single season.

Their favourite grounds were, not the broad open stretches of the big ranches, but the complicated, much-fenced fields of the farms, where these were so small and close as to be like a big straggling village.

One of these vegetable villages had sprung up around the railway station of Newchusen. The country a mile away was well supplied with Jack-rabbits of the new and selected stock. Among them was a little lady Rabbit called "Bright-eyes," from her leading characteristic as she sat gray in the gray brush. She was a good runner, but was especially successful with the fence-play that baffled the Coyotes. She made her nest out in an open pasture, an untouched tract of the ancient prairie. Here her brood were born and raised. One like herself was bright-eyed, in coat of

ilver-gray, and partly gifted with her eady wits, but in the other, there appeared . rare combination of his mother's gifts vith the best that was in the best strain f the new Jack-rabbits of the plains.

This was the one whose adventures we ave been following, the one that later on he turf won the name of Little Warhorse nd that afterward achieved a world-wide ame.

Ancient tricks of his kind he revived nd put to new uses, and ancient enemies e learned to fight with new-found tricks.

When a mere baby he discovered a plan nat was worthy of the wisest Rabbit in askado. He was pursued by a horrible ttle Yellow Dog, and he had tried in vain get rid of him by dodging among the olds and farms. This is good play against Coyote, because the farmers and the ogs will often help the Jack, without nowing it, by attacking the Coyote. But ow the plan did not work at all, for the ttle Dog managed to keep after him

through one fence after another, and Jack Warhorse, not yet full-grown, much less seasoned, was beginning to feel the strain. His ears were no longer up straight, but angling back and at times drooping to a level, as he darted through a very little hole in an Osage hedge, only to find that his nimble enemy had done the same without loss of time. In the middle of the field was a small herd of cattle and with them a calf.

There is in wild animals a curious impulse to trust any stranger when in desperate straits. The foe behind they know means death. There is just a chance, and the only one left, that the stranger may prove friendly; and it was this last desperate chance that drew Jack Warhorse to the Cows.

It is quite sure that the Cows would have stood by in stolid indifference so far as the Rabbit was concerned, but they have a deep-rooted hatred of a Dog, and when they saw the Yellow Cur coming bounding

toward them, their tails and noses went up; they sniffed angrily, then closed up ranks, and led by the Cow that owned the Calf, they charged at the Dog, while Jack took refuge under a low thorn-bush. The Dog swerved aside to attack the Calf, at least the old Cow thought he did, and she followed him so fiercely that he barely escaped from that field with his life.

It was a good old plan—one that doubtless came from the days when Buffalo and Coyote played the parts of Cow and Dog. Jack never forgot it, and more than once it saved his life.

In colour as well as in power he was a rarity.

Animals are coloured in one or other of two general plans: one that matches them with their surroundings and helps them to hide—this is called "protective"; the other that makes them very visible for several purposes—this is called "directive." Jack-rabbits are peculiar in being painted both ways. As they squat in their form in

the gray brush or clods, they are soft gray on their ears, head, back, and sides; they match the ground and cannot be seen until close at hand—they are *protectively* coloured. But the moment it is clear to the Jack that the approaching foe will find him, he jumps up and dashes away. He throws off all disguise now, the gray seems to disappear; he makes a lightning change, and his ears show snowy white with black tips, the legs are white, his tail is a black spot in a blaze of white. He is a black-and-white Rabbit now. His colouring is all *directive*. How is it done? Very simply. The front side of the ear is gray, the back, black-and-white. The black tail with its white halo, and the legs, are tucked below. He is sitting on them. The gray mantle is pulled down and enlarged as he sits, but when he jumps up it shrinks somewhat, all his black-and-white marks are now shown, and just as his colours formerly whispered, "I am a clod," they now shout aloud, "I am a Jack-rabbit."

Why should he do this? Why should a timid creature running for his life thus proclaim to all the world his name instead of trying to hide? There must be some good reason. It must pay, or the Rabbit would never have done it. The answer is, if the creature that scared him up was one of his own kind—*i. e.* this was a false alarm—then at once, by showing his national colours, the mistake is made right. On the other hand, if it be a Coyote, Fox, or Dog, they see at once, this is a Jack-rabbit, and know that it would be waste of time for them to pursue him. They say in effect, "This is a Jack-rabbit, and I cannot catch a Jack in open race." They give it up, and that, of course, saves the Jack a great deal of unnecessary running and worry. The black-and-white spots are the national uniform and flag of the Jacks. In poor specimens they are apt to be dull, but in the finest specimens they are not only larger, but brighter than usual, and the little Warhorse, gray when he sat in

his form, blazed like charcoal and snow, when he flung his defiance to the Fox and buff Coyote, and danced with little effort before them, first a black-and-white Jack, then a little white spot, and last a speck of thistledown, before the distance swallowed him.

Many of the farmers' Dogs had learned the lesson: "A grayish Rabbit you may catch, but a very black-and-white one is hopeless." They might, indeed, follow for a time, but that was merely for the fun of a chivvy, and his growing power often led Warhorse to seek the chase for the sake of a little excitement, and to take hazards that others less gifted were most careful to avoid.

Jack, like all other wild animals, had a certain range or country which was home to him, and outside of this he rarely strayed. It was about three miles across, extending easterly from the centre of the village. Scattered through this he had a number of "forms," or "beds" as they are locally

called. These were mere hollows situated under a sheltering bush or bunch of grass, without lining excepting the accidental grass and in-blown leaves. But comfort was not forgotten. Some of them were for hot weather; they faced the north, were scarcely sunk, were little more than shady places. Some for the cold weather were deep hollows with southern exposure, and others for the wet were well roofed with herbage and faced the west. In one or other of these he spent the day, and at night he went forth to feed with his kind, sporting and romping on the moonlight nights like a lot of puppy Dogs, but careful to be gone by sunrise, and safely tucked in a bed that was suited to the weather.

The safest ground for the Jacks was among the farms, where not only Osage hedges, but also the newly arrived barb-wire, made hurdles and hazards in the path of possible enemies. But the finest of the forage is nearer to the village among

the truck-farms—the finest of forage and the fiercest of dangers. Some of the dangers of the plains were lacking, but the greater perils of men, guns, Dogs, and impassable fences are much increased. Yet those who knew Warhorse best were not at all surprised to find that he had made a form in the middle of a market-gardener's melon-patch. A score of dangers beset him here, but there was also a score of unusual delights and a score of holes in the fence for times when he had to fly, with at least twoscore of expedients to help him afterward.

III

Newchusen was a typical Western town. Everywhere in it were to be seen strenuous efforts at uglification, crowned with unmeasured success. The streets were straight level lanes without curves or beauty-spots.

The houses were cheap and mean structures of flimsy boards and tar paper, and not even honest in their ugliness, for each of them was pretending to be something better than itself. One had a false front to make it look like two stories, another was of imitation brick, a third pretended to be a marble temple.

But all agreed in being the ugliest things ever used as human dwellings, and in each could be read the owner's secret thought—to stand it for a year or so, then move out somewhere else. The only beauties of the place, and those unintentional, were the long lines of hand-planted shade-trees, uglified as far as possible with white-washed trunks and croppy heads, but still lovable, growing, living things.

The only building in town with a touch of picturesqueness was the grain elevator. It was not posing as a Greek temple or a Swiss châlet, but simply a strong, rough, honest, grain elevator. At the end of each street was a vista of the prairie, with its

farm-houses, windmill pumps, and long lines of Osage-orange hedges. Here at least was something of interest—the gray-green hedges, thick, sturdy, and high, were dotted with their golden mock-oranges, useless fruit, but more welcome here than rain in a desert; for these balls were things of beauty, and swung on their long tough boughs they formed with the soft green leaves a colour-chord that pleased the weary eye.

Such a town is a place to get out of, as soon as possible, so thought the traveller who found himself laid over here for two days in late winter. He asked after the sights of the place. A white Muskrat stuffed in a case "down to the saloon"; old Baccy Bullin, who had been scalped by the Indians forty years ago; and a pipe once smoked by Kit Carson, proved unattractive, so he turned toward the prairie, still white with snow.

A mark among the numerous Dog tracks caught his eye: it was the track of a large

Jack-rabbit. He asked a passer-by if there were any Rabbits in town.

"No, I reckon not. I never seen none," was the answer. A mill-hand gave the same reply, but a small boy with a bundle of newspapers said: "You bet there is; there's lots of them out there on the prairie, and they come in town a-plenty. Why, there's a big, big feller lives right round Si Kalb's melon-patch—oh, an awful big feller, and just as black and as white as checkers!" and thus he sent the stranger eastward on his walk.

The "big, big, awful big one" was the Little Warhorse himself. He didn't live in Kalb's melon-patch; he was there only at odd times. He was not there now; he was in his west-fronting form or bed, because a raw east wind was setting in. It was due east of Madison Avenue, and as the stranger plodded that way the Rabbit watched him. As long as the man kept the road the Jack was quiet, but the road turned shortly to the north, and the man

by chance left it and came straight on. Then the Jack saw trouble ahead. The moment the man left the beaten track, he bounded from his form, and wheeling, he sailed across the prairie due east.

A Jack-rabbit running from its enemy ordinarily covers eight or nine feet at a bound, and once in five or six bounds, it makes an observation hop, leaping not along, but high in the air, so as to get above all herbage and bushes and take in the situation. A silly young Jack will make an observation hop as often as one in four, and so waste a great deal of time. A clever Jack will make one hop in eight or nine do for observation. But Jack Warhorse as he sped, got all the information he needed, in one hop out of a dozen, while ten to fourteen feet were covered by each of his flying bounds. Yet another personal peculiarity showed in the trail he left. When a Cottontail or a Woodhare runs, his tail is curled up tight on his back, and does not touch the snow. When

Jack runs, his tail hangs downward or ackward, with the tip curved or straight, ccording to the individual; in some, it oints straight down, and so, often leaves little stroke behind the foot-marks. The Varhorse's tail of shining black, was of nusual length, and at every bound, it left n the snow, a long stroke, so long that that lone was almost enough to tell which Rabbit had made the track.

Now some Rabbits seeing only a man ithout any Dog would have felt little fear, ut Warhorse, remembering some former inging experiences with a far-killer, fled hen the foe was seventy-five yards away, nd skimming low, he ran south-east to a ence that ran easterly. Behind this he ent like a low-flying Hawk, till a mile way he reached another of his beds; and ere, after an observation taken as he ood on his heels, he settled again to st.

But not for long. In twenty minutes s great megaphone ears, so close to the

ground, caught a regular sound—crunch, crunch, crunch—the tramp of a human foot, and he started up to see the man with the shining stick in his hand, now drawing near.

Warhorse bounded out and away for the fence. Never once did he rise to a "spy-hop" till the wire and rails were between him and his foe, an unnecessary precaution as it chanced, for the man was watching the trail and saw nothing of the Rabbit.

Jack skimmed along, keeping low and looking out for other enemies. He knew now that the man was on his track, and the old instinct born of ancestral trouble with Weasels was doubtless what prompted him to do the double trail. He ran in a long, straight course to a distant fence, followed its far side for fifty yards, then doubling back he retraced his trail and ran off in a new direction till he reached another of his dens or forms. He had been out all night and was very ready to rest, now

that the sun was ablaze on the snow; but he had hardly got the place a little warmed when the "tramp, tramp, tramp" announced the enemy, and he hurried away.

After a half-a-mile run he stopped on a slight rise and marked the man still following, so he made a series of wonderful quirks in his trail, a succession of blind zigzags that would have puzzled most trailers; then running a hundred yards past a favourite form, he returned to it from the other side, and settled to rest, sure that now the enemy would be finally thrown off the scent.

It was slower than before, but still it came—"tramp, tramp, tramp."

Jack awoke, but sat still. The man tramped by on the trail one hundred yards in front of him, and as he went on, Jack sprang out unseen, realizing that this was an unusual occasion needing a special effort. They had gone in a vast circle around the home range of the Warhorse and now were less than a mile from the

farm-house of the black Dog. There was that wonderful board fence with the happily planned hen-hole. It was a place of good memory—here more than once he had won, here especially he had baffled the Greyhound.

These doubtless were the motive thoughts rather than any plan of playing one enemy against another, and Warhorse bounded openly across the snow to the fence of the big black Dog.

The hen-hole was shut, and Warhorse, not a little puzzled, sneaked around to find another, without success, until, around the front, here was the gate wide open, and inside lying on some boards was the big Dog, fast asleep. The Hens were sitting hunched up in the warmest corner of the yard. The house Cat was gingerly picking her way from barn to kitchen, as Warhorse halted in the gateway.

The black form of his pursuer was crawling down the far white prairie slope. Jack hopped quietly into the yard. A long-

legged Rooster, that ought to have minded his own business, uttered a loud cackle as he saw the Rabbit hopping near. The Dog lying in the sun raised his head and stood up, and Jack's peril was dire. He squatted low and turned himself into a gray clod. He did it cleverly, but still might have been lost but for the Cat. Unwittingly, unwillingly, she saved him. The black Dog had taken three steps toward the Warhorse, though he did not know the Rabbit was there, and was now blocking the only way of escape from the yard, when the Cat came round the corner of the house, and leaping to a window-ledge brought a flower-pot rolling down. By that single awkward act she disturbed the armed neutrality existing between herself and the Dog. She fled to the barn, and of course a flying foe is all that is needed to send a Dog on the war-path. They passed within thirty feet of the crouching Rabbit. As soon as they were well gone, Jack turned, and without even a "Thank

you, Pussy," he fled to the open and away on the hard-beaten road.

The Cat had been rescued by the lady of the house; the Dog was once more sprawling on the boards when the man on Jack's trail arrived. He carried, not a gun, but a stout stick, sometimes called "dog-medicine," and that was all that prevented the Dog attacking the enemy of his prey.

This seemed to be the end of the trail. The trick, whether planned or not, was a success, and the Rabbit got rid of his troublesome follower.

Next day the stranger made another search for the Jack and found, not himself, but his track. He knew it by its tail-mark, its long leaps and few spy-hops, but with it and running by it was the track of a smaller Rabbit. Here is where they met, here they chased each other in play, for no signs of battle were there to be seen; here they fed or sat together in the sun, there they ambled side by side,

and here again they sported in the snow, always together. There was only one conclusion: this was the mating season. This was a pair of Jack-rabbits—the Little Warhorse and his mate.

IV

Next summer was a wonderful year for the Jack-rabbits. A foolish law had set a bounty on Hawks and Owls and had caused a general massacre of these feathered policemen. Consequently the Rabbits had multiplied in such numbers that they now were threatening to devastate the country.

The farmers, who were the sufferers from the bounty law, as well as the makers of it, decided on a great Rabbit drive. All the county was invited to come, on a given morning, to the main road north of the county, with the intention of sweeping

the whole region up-wind and at length driving the Rabbits into a huge corral of close wire netting. Dogs were barred as unmanageable, and guns as dangerous in a crowd; but every man and boy carried a couple of long sticks and a bagful of stones. Women came on horseback and in buggies; many carried rattles or horns and tins to make a noise. A number of the buggies trailed a string of old cans or tied laths to scrape on the wheel-spokes, and thus add no little to the deafening clatter of the drive. As Rabbits have marvellously sensitive hearing, a noise that is distracting to mankind is likely to prove bewildering to them.

The weather was right, and at eight in the morning the word to advance was given. The line was about five miles long at first, and there was a man or a boy every thirty or forty yards. The buggies and riders kept perforce almost entirely to the roads; but the beaters were supposed, as a point of honour, to face everything,

and keep the front unbroken. The advance was roughly in three sides of a square. Each man made as much noise as he could, and threshed every bush in his path. A number of Rabbits hopped out. Some made for the lines, to be at once assailed by a shower of stones that laid many of them low. One or two did get through and escaped, but the majority were swept before the drive. At first the number seen was small, but before three miles were covered the Rabbits were running ahead in every direction. After five miles—and that took about three hours—the word for the wings to close in was given. The space between the men was shortened up till they were less than ten feet apart, and the whole drive converged on the corral with its two long guide wings or fences; the end lines joined these wings, and the surround was complete. The drivers marched rapidly now; scores of the Rabbits were killed as they ran too near the beaters. Their bodies strewed

the ground, but the swarms seemed to increase; and in the final move, before the victims were cooped up in the corral, the two-acre space surrounded was a whirling throng of skurrying, jumping, bounding Rabbits. Round and round they circled and leaped, looking for a chance to escape; but the inexorable crowd grew thicker as the ring grew steadily smaller, and the whole swarm was forced along the chute into the tight corral, some to squat stupidly in the middle, some to race round the outer wall, some to seek hiding in corners or under each other.

And the Little Warhorse—where was he in all this? The drive had swept him along, and he had been one of the first to enter the corral. But a curious plan of selection had been established. The pen was to be a death-trap for the Rabbits, except the best, the soundest. And many were there that were unsound; those that think of all wild animals as pure and perfect things, would have been shocked to

see how many halt, maimed, and diseased there were in that pen of four thousand or five thousand Jack-rabbits.

It was a Roman victory—the rabble of prisoners was to be butchered. The choicest were to be reserved for the arena. The arena? Yes, that is the Coursing Park.

In that corral trap, prepared beforehand for the Rabbits, were a number of small boxes along the wall, a whole series of them, five hundred at least, each large enough to hold one Jack.

In the last rush of driving, the swiftest Jacks got first to the pen. Some were swift and silly; when once inside they rushed wildly round and round. Some were swift and wise; they quickly sought the hiding afforded by the little boxes; all of these were now full. Thus five hundred of the swiftest and wisest had been selected, in, not by any means an infallible way, but the simplest and readiest. These five hundred were destined to be coursed by Greyhounds. The surging mass

of over four thousand were ruthlessly given to slaughter.

Five hundred little boxes with five hundred bright-eyed Jack-rabbits were put on the train that day, and among them was Little Jack Warhorse.

V

Rabbits take their troubles lightly, and it is not to be supposed that any great terror was felt by the boxed Jacks, once the uproar of the massacre was over; and when they reached the Coursing Park near the great city and were turned out one by one, very gently,—yes, gently; the Roman guards were careful of their prisoners, being responsible for them,—the Jacks found little to complain of, a big inclosure with plenty of good food, and no enemies to annoy them.

The very next morning their training

began. A score of hatchways were opened into a much larger field—the Park. After a number of Jacks had wandered out through these doors a rabble of boys appeared and drove them back, pursuing them noisily until all were again in the smaller field, called the Haven. A few days of this taught the Jack-rabbits that when pursued their safety was to get back by one of the hatches into the Haven.

Now the second lesson began. The whole band were driven out of a side door into a long lane which led around three sides of the Park to another inclosure at the far end. This was the Starting Pen. Its door into the arena—that is, the Park—was opened, the Rabbits driven forth, and then a mob of boys and Dogs in hiding, burst forth and pursued them across the open. The whole army went bobbing and bounding away, some of the younger ones soaring in a spy-hop, as a matter of habit; but low skimming ahead of them all was a gorgeous black-and-white one; clean-

limbed and bright-eyed, he had attracted attention in the pen, but now in the field he led the band with easy lope that put him as far ahead of them all as they were ahead of the rabble of common Dogs.

"Luk at thot, would ye—but ain't he a Little Warhorse?" shouted a villainous-looking Irish stable-boy, and thus he was named. When half-way across the course the Jacks remembered the Haven, and all swept toward it and in like a snow-cloud over the drifts.

This was the second lesson—to lead straight for the Haven as soon as driven from the Pen. In a week all had learned it, and were ready for the great opening meet of the Coursing Club.

The Little Warhorse was now well known to the grooms and hangers-on; his colours usually marked him clearly, and his leadership was in a measure recognized by the long-eared herd that fled with him. He figured more or less with the Dogs in the talk and betting of the men.

"Wonder if old Dignam is going to enter Minkie this year?"

"Faix, an' if he does I bet the Little Warrhorrse will take the gimp out av her an' her runnin' mate."

"I'll bet three to one that my old Jen will pick the Warhorse up before he passes the grand stand," growled a dog-man.

"An' it's meself will take thot bet in dollars," said Mickey, "an', moore than thot, Oi'll put up a hull month's stuff thot there ain't a dog in the mate thot kin turrn the Warrhorrse oncet on the hull coorse."

So they wrangled and wagered, but each day, as they put the Rabbits through their paces, there were more of those who believed that they had found a wonderful runner in the Warhorse, one that would give the best Greyhounds something that is rarely seen, a straight stern chase from Start to Grand Stand and Haven.

VI

The first morning of the meet arrived bright and promising. The Grand Stand was filled with a city crowd. The usual types of a racecourse appeared in force. Here and there were to be seen the dog-grooms leading in leash single Greyhounds or couples, shrouded in blankets, but showing their sinewy legs, their snaky necks, their shapely heads with long reptilian jaws, and their quick, nervous yellow eyes —hybrids of natural force and human ingenuity, the most wonderful running-machines ever made of flesh and blood. Their keepers guarded them like jewels, tended them like babies, and were careful to keep them from picking up odd eatables, as well as prevent them smelling unusual objects or being approached by strangers. Large sums were wagered on these Dogs, and a cunningly placed tack, a piece of doctored meat, yes, an artfully compounded

smell, has been known to turn a superb young runner into a lifeless laggard, and to the owner this might spell *ruin*. The Dogs entered in each class are paired off, as each contest is supposed to be a duel; the winners in the first series are then paired again. In each trial, a Jack is driven from the Starting Pen; close by in one leash are the rival Dogs, held by the slipper. As soon as the Hare is well away, the man has to get the Dogs evenly started and slip them together. On the field is the judge, scarlet-coated, and well mounted. He follows the chase. The Hare, mindful of his training, speeds across the open, toward the Haven, in full view of the Grand Stand. The Dogs follow the Jack. As the first one comes near enough to be dangerous, the Hare balks him by dodging. Each time the Hare is turned, scores for the Dog that did it, and a final point is made by the kill.

Sometimes the kill takes place within one hundred yards of the start—that

means a poor Jack; mostly it happens in front of the Grand Stand; but on rare occasions it chances that the Jack goes sailing across the open Park a good half-mile and, by dodging for time, runs to safety in the Haven. Four finishes are possible: a speedy kill; a speedy winning of the Haven; new Dogs to relieve the first runners, who would suffer heart-collapse in the terrific strain of their pace, if kept up many minutes in hot weather; and finally, for Rabbits that by continued dodging defy and jeopardize the Dogs, and yet do not win the Haven, there is kept a *loaded shotgun*.

There is just as much jockeying at a Kaskado coursing as at a Kaskado horse-race, just as many attempts at fraud, and it is just as necessary to have the judge and slipper beyond suspicion.

The day before the next meet a man of diamonds saw Irish Mickey—by chance. A cigar was all that visibly passed, but it had a green wrapper that was slipped

off before lighting. Then a word: "If you wuz slipper to-morrow and it so came about that Dignam's Minkie gets done, wall,—it means another cigar."

"Faix, an' if I wuz slipper I could load the dice so Minkie would niver score a p'int, but her runnin' mate would have the same bad luck."

"That so?" The diamond man looked interested. "All right—fix it so; it means two cigars."

Slipper Slyman had always dealt on the square, had scorned many approaches—that was well known. Most believed in him, but there were some malcontents, and when a man with many gold seals approached the Steward and formulated charges, serious and well-backed, they must perforce suspend the slipper pending an inquiry, and thus Mickey Doo reigned in his stead.

Mickey was poor and not over-scrupulous. Here was a chance to make a year's pay in a minute, nothing wrong about

it, no harm to the Dog or the Rabbit either.

One Jack-rabbit is much like another. Everybody knows that; it was simply a question of choosing your Jack.

The preliminaries were over. Fifty Jacks had been run and killed. Mickey had done his work satisfactorily; a fair slip had been given to every leash. He was still in command as slipper. Now came the final for the cup—the cup and the large stakes.

VII

There were the slim and elegant Dogs awaiting their turn. Minkie and her rival were first. Everything had been fair so far, and who can say that what followed was unfair? Mickey could turn out which Jack he pleased.

"Number three!" he called to his partner.

Out leaped the Little Warhorse,—black and white his great ears, easy and low his five-foot bounds; gazing wildly at the unwonted crowd about the Park, he leaped high in one surprising spy-hop.

"Hrrrrr!" shouted the slipper, and his partner rattled a stick on the fence. The Warhorse's bounds increased to eight or nine feet.

"Hrrrrrr!" and they were ten or twelve feet. At thirty yards the Hounds were slipped—an even slip; some thought it could have been done at twenty yards.

"Hrrrrrr! Hrrrrrrr!" and the Warhorse was doing fourteen-foot leaps, not a spy-hop among them.

"Hrrrrr!" wonderful Dogs! how they sailed; but drifting ahead of them, like a white sea-bird or flying scud, was the Warhorse. Away past the Grand Stand. And the Dogs—were they closing the gap of start? Closing! It was lengthening! In less time than it takes to tell it, that black-and-white thistledown had drifted

away through the Haven door,—the door so like that good old hen-hole,—and the Greyhounds pulled up amidst a roar of derision and cheers for the Little Warhorse. How Mickey did laugh! How Dignam did swear! How the newspaper men did scribble—scribble—scribble!

Next day there was a paragraph in all the papers: "WONDERFUL FEAT OF A JACK-RABBIT. The Little Warhorse, as he has been styled, completely skunked two of the most famous Dogs on the turf," etc.

There was a fierce wrangle among the dog-men. This was a tie, since neither had scored, and Minkie and her rival were allowed to run again; but that half-mile had been too hot, and they had no show for the cup.

Mickey met "Diamonds" next day, *by chance.*

"Have a cigar, Mickey."

"Oi will thot, sor. Faix, thim's so foine, I'd loike two—thank ye, sor."

VIII

From that time the Little Warhorse became the pride of the Irish boy. Slipper Slyman had been honourably reinstated and Mickey reduced to the rank of Jack-starter, but that merely helped to turn his sympathies from the Dogs to the Rabbits, or rather to the Warhorse, for of all the five hundred that were brought in from the drive he alone had won renown. There were several that crossed the Park to run again another day, but he alone had crossed the course without getting even a turn. Twice a week the meets took place; forty or fifty Jacks were killed each time, and the five hundred in the pen had been nearly all eaten of the arena.

The Warhorse had run each day, and as often had made the Haven. Mickey became wildly enthusiastic about his favourite's powers. He begot a positive affection for the clean-limbed racer, and

stoutly maintained against all that it was a positive honour to a Dog to be disgraced by such a Jack.

It is so seldom that a Rabbit crosses the track at all, that when Jack did it six times without having to dodge, the papers took note of it, and after each meet there appeared a notice: "The Little Warhorse crossed again to-day; old-timers say it shows how our Dogs are deteriorating."

After the sixth time the rabbit-keepers grew enthusiastic, and Mickey, commander-in-chief of the brigade, became intemperate in his admiration. "Be jabers, he has a right to be torned loose. He has won his freedom loike ivery Amerikin done," he added, by way of appeal to the patriotism of the Steward of the race, who was, of course, the real owner of the Jacks.

"All right, Mick; if he gets across thirteen times you can ship him back to his native land," was the reply.

"Shure now, an' won't you make it tin, sor?"

"No, no; I need him to take the conceit out of some of the new Dogs that are coming."

"Thirteen toimes and he is free, sor; it's a bargain."

A new lot of Rabbits arrived about this time, and one of these was coloured much like Little Warhorse. He had no such speed, but to prevent mistakes Mickey caught his favourite by driving him into one of the padded shipping-boxes, and proceeded with the gate-keeper's punch to earmark him. The punch was sharp; a clear star was cut out of the thin flap, when Mickey exclaimed: "Faix, an' Oi'll punch for ivery toime ye cross the coorse." So he cut six stars in a row. "Thayer now, Warrhorrse, shure it's a free Rabbit ye'll be when ye have yer thirteen stars loike our flag of liberty hed when *we* got free."

Within a week the Warhorse had vanquished the new Greyhounds and had stars enough to go round the right ear and begin

on the left. In a week more the thirteen runs were completed, six stars in the left ear and seven in the right, and the newspapers had new material.

"Whoop!" How Mickey hoorayed! "An' it's a free Jack ye are, Warrhorrse! Thirteen always wuz a lucky number. I never knowed it to fail."

IX

"YES, I know I did," said the Steward. "But I want to give him one more run. I have a bet on him against a new Dog here. It won't hurt him now; he can do it. Oh, well. Here now, Mickey, don't you get sassy. One run more this afternoon. The Dogs run two or three times a day; why not the Jack?"

"They're not shtakin' thayre loives, sor."

"Oh, you get out."

Many more Rabbits had been added to the pen,—big and small, peaceful and warlike,—and one big Buck of savage instincts, seeing Jack Warhorse's hurried dash into the Haven that morning, took advantage of the moment to attack him.

At another time Jack would have thumped his skull, as he once did the Cat's, and settled the affair in a minute; but now it took several minutes, during which he himself got roughly handled; so when the afternoon came he was suffering from one or two bruises and stiffening wounds; not serious, indeed, but enough to lower his speed.

The start was much like those of previous runs. The Warhorse steaming away low and lightly, his ears up and the breezes whistling through his thirteen stars.

Minkie with Fango, the new Dog, bounded in eager pursuit, but, to the surprise of the starters, the gap grew smaller. The Warhorse was losing ground, and right before the Grand Stand old Minkie turned him,

and a cheer went up from the dog-men, for all knew the runners. Within fifty yards Fango scored a turn, and the race was right back to the start. There stood Slyman and Mickey. The Rabbit dodged, the Greyhounds plunged; Jack could not get away, and just as the final snap seemed near, the Warhorse leaped straight for Mickey, and in an instant was hidden in his arms, while the starter's feet flew out in energetic kicks to repel the furious Dogs. It is not likely that the Jack knew Mickey for a friend; he only yielded to the old instinct to fly from a certain enemy to a neutral or a possible friend, and, as luck would have it, he had wisely leaped and well. A cheer went up from the benches as Mickey hurried back with his favourite. But the dog-men protested "it wasn't a fair run—they wanted it finished." They appealed to the Steward. He had backed the Jack against Fango. He was sore now, and ordered a new race.

An hour's rest was the best Mickey

could get for him. Then he went as before, with Fango and Minkie in pursuit. He seemed less stiff now—he ran more like himself; but a little past the Stand he was turned by Fango and again by Minkie, and back and across, and here and there, leaping frantically and barely eluding his foes. For several minutes it lasted. Mickey could see that Jack's ears were sinking. The new Dog leaped. Jack dodged almost under him to escape, and back only to meet the second Dog; and now both ears were flat on his back. But the Hounds were suffering too. Their tongues were lolling out; their jaws and heaving sides were splashed with foam. The Warhorse's ears went up again. His courage seemed to revive in their distress. He made a straight dash for the Haven; but the straight dash was just what the Hounds could do, and within a hundred yards he was turned again, to begin another desperate game of zigzag. Then the dog-men saw danger for their Dogs, and two new ones were slipped

—two fresh Hounds; surely they could end the race. *But they did not.* The first two were vanquished—gasping—out of it, but the next two were racing near. The Warhorse put forth all his strength. He left the first two far behind—was nearly to the Haven when the second two came up.

Nothing but dodging could save him now. His ears were sinking, his heart was pattering on his ribs, but his spirit was strong. He flung himself in wildest zigzags. The Hounds tumbled over each other. Again and again they thought they had him. One of them snapped off the end of his long black tail, yet he escaped; but he could not get to the Haven. The luck was against him. He was forced nearer to the Grand Stand. A thousand ladies were watching. The time limit was up. The second Dogs were suffering, when Mickey came running, yelling like a madman—words—imprecations—crazy sounds:

"Ye blackguard hoodlums! Ye dhirty, cowardly bastes!" and he rushed furiously

at the Dogs, intent to do them bodily harm.

Officers came running and shouting, and Mickey, shrieking hatred and defiance, was dragged from the field, reviling Dogs and men with every horrid, insulting name he could think of or invent.

"Fair play! Whayer's yer fair play, ye liars, ye dhirty cheats, ye bloody cowards!" And they drove him from the arena. The last he saw of it was the four foaming Dogs feebly dodging after a weak and worn-out Jack-rabbit, and the judge on his Horse beckoning to the man with the gun.

The gate closed behind him, and Mickey heard a *bang—bang*, an unusual uproar mixed with yelps of Dogs, and he knew that Little Jack Warhorse had been served with finish No. 4.

All his life he had loved Dogs, but his sense of fair play was outraged. He could not get in, nor see in from where he was. He raced along the lane to the Haven,

where he might get a good view, and arrived in time to see—Little Jack Warhorse with his half-masted ears limp into the Haven; and he realized at once that the man with the gun had missed, had hit the wrong runner, for there was the crowd at the Stand watching two men who were carrying a wounded Greyhound, while a veterinary surgeon was ministering to another that was panting on the ground.

Mickey looked about, seized a little shipping-box, put it at the angle of the Haven, carefully drove the tired thing into it, closed the lid, then, with the box under his arm, he scaled the fence unseen in the confusion and was gone.

"It didn't matter; he had lost his job anyway." He tramped away from the city. He took the train at the nearest station and travelled some hours, and now he was in Rabbit country again. The sun had long gone down; the night with its stars was over the plain when among the farms, the Osage and alfalfa, Mickey Doo

opened the box and gently put the Warhorse out.

Grinning as he did so, he said: "Shure an' it's ould Oireland thot's proud to set the thirteen stars at liberty wance moore."

For a moment the Little Warhorse gazed in doubt, then took three or four long leaps and a spy-hop to get his bearings. Now spreading his national colours and his honour-marked ears, he bounded into his hard-won freedom, strong as ever, and melted into the night of his native plain.

He has been seen many times in Kaskado, and there have been many Rabbit drives in that region, but he seems to know some means of baffling them now, for, in all the thousands that have been trapped and corralled, they have never since seen the star-spangled ears of Little Jack Warhorse.

BADLANDS BILLY

THE WOLF THAT WON

I

THE HOWL BY NIGHT

Do you know the three calls of the hunting Wolf: the long-drawn deep howl, the muster, that tells of game discovered but too strong for the finder to manage alone; and the higher ululation that ringing and swelling is the cry of the pack on a hot scent; and the sharp bark coupled with a short howl that, seeming least of all, is yet a gong of doom, for this is the cry "*Close in*"—this is the finish?

We were riding the Badland Buttes, King and I, with a pack of various hunting Dogs stringing behind or trotting alongside. The sun had gone from the sky, and a blood-streak marked the spot where he died, away over Sentinel Butte. The hills were dim, the valleys dark, when from the nearest

gloom there rolled a long-drawn cry that all men recognize instinctively—melodious, yet with a tone in it that sends a shudder up the spine, though now it has lost all menace for mankind. We listened for a moment. It was the Wolf-hunter who broke silence: "That's Badlands Billy; ain't it a voice? He's out for his beef to-night."

II

ANCIENT DAYS

In pristine days the Buffalo herds were followed by bands of Wolves that preyed on the sick, the weak, and the wounded. When the Buffalo were exterminated the Wolves were hard put for support, but the Cattle came and solved the question for them by taking the Buffaloes' place. This caused the wolf-war. The ranchmen offered a bounty for each Wolf killed, and every

cowboy out of work, was supplied with traps and poison for wolf-killing. The very expert made this their sole business and became known as wolvers. King Ryder was one of these. He was a quiet, gentle-spoken fellow, with a keen eye and an insight into animal life that gave him especial power over Broncos and Dogs, as well as Wolves and Bears, though in the last two cases it was power merely to surmise where they were and how best to get at them. He had been a wolver for years, and greatly surprised me by saying that "never in all his experience had he known a Gray-wolf to attack a human being."

We had many camp-fire talks while the other men were sleeping, and then it was I learned the little that he knew about Badlands Billy. "Six times have I seen him and the seventh will be Sunday, you bet. He takes his long rest then." And thus on the very ground where it all fell out, to the noise of the night wind and the yapping of the Coyote, interrupted sometimes by

the deep-drawn howl of the hero himself, I heard chapters of this history which, with others gleaned in many fields, gave me the story of the Big Dark Wolf of Sentinel Butte.

III

IN THE CAÑON

Away back in the spring of '92 a wolver was "wolving" on the east side of the Sentinel Mountain that so long was a principal landmark of the old Plainsmen. Pelts were not good in May, but the bounties were high, five dollars a head, and double for She-wolves. As he went down to the creek one morning he saw a Wolf coming to drink on the other side. He had an easy shot, and on killing it found it was a nursing She-wolf. Evidently her family were somewhere near, so he spent two or three days

searching in all the likely places, but found no clue to the den.

Two weeks afterward, as the wolver rode down an adjoining cañon, he saw a Wolf come out of a hole. The ever-ready rifle flew up, and another ten-dollar scalp was added to his string. Now he dug into the den and found the litter, a most surprising one indeed, for it consisted not of the usual five or six Wolf-pups, but of eleven, and these, strange to say, were of two sizes, five of them larger and older than the other six. Here were two distinct families with one mother, and as he added their scalps to his string of trophies the truth dawned on the hunter. One lot was surely the family of the She-wolf he had killed two weeks before. The case was clear: the little ones awaiting the mother that was never to come, had whined piteously and more loudly as their hunger-pangs increased; the other mother passing had heard the Cubs; her heart was tender now, her own little ones had so recently come, and she cared for the

orphans, carried them to her own den, and was providing for the double family when the rifleman had cut the gentle chapter short.

Many a wolver has dug into a wolf-den to find nothing. The old Wolves or possibly the Cubs themselves often dig little side pockets and off galleries, and when an enemy is breaking in they hide in these. The loose earth conceals the small pocket and thus the Cubs escape. When the wolver retired with his scalps he did not know that the biggest of all the Cubs was still in the den, and even had he waited about for two hours he might have been no wiser. Three hours later the sun went down and there was a slight scratching afar in the hole; first two little gray paws, then a small black nose appeared in a soft sand-pile to one side of the den. At length the Cub came forth from his hiding. He had been frightened by the attack on the den; now he was perplexed by its condition.

It was thrice as large as it had been and

open at the top now. Lying near were things that smelled like his brothers and sisters, but they were repellent to him. He was filled with fear as he sniffed at them, and sneaked aside into a thicket of grass as a Night-hawk boomed over his head. He crouched all night in that thicket. He did not dare to go near the den, and knew not where else he could go. The next morning when two Vultures came swooping down on the bodies, the Wolf-cub ran off in the thicket, and seeking its deepest cover, was led down a ravine to a wide valley. Suddenly there arose from the grass a big She-wolf, like his mother, yet different, a stranger, and instinctively the stray Cub sank to the earth, as the old Wolf bounded on him. No doubt the Cub had been taken for some lawful prey, but a whiff set that right. She stood over him for an instant. He grovelled at her feet. The impulse to kill him or at least give him a shake died away. He had the smell of a young Cub. Her own were about his

age, her heart was touched, and when he found courage enough to put his nose up and smell her nose, she made no angry demonstration except a short half-hearted growl. Now, however, he had smelled something that he sorely needed. He had not fed since the day before, and when the old Wolf turned to leave him, he tumbled after her on clumsy puppy legs. Had the Mother-wolf been far from home he must soon have been left behind, but the nearest hollow was the chosen place, and the Cub arrived at the den's mouth soon after the Mother-wolf.

A stranger is an enemy, and the old one rushing forth to the defence, met the Cub again, and again was restrained by something that rose in her responsive to the smell. The Cub had thrown himself on his back in utter submission, but that did not prevent his nose reporting to him the good thing almost within reach. The She-wolf went into the den and curled herself about her brood; the Cub persisted in following. She

snarled as he approached her own little ones, but disarming wrath each time by submission and his very cubhood, he was presently among her brood, helping himself to what he wanted so greatly, and thus he adopted himself into her family. In a few days he was so much one of them that the mother forgot about his being a stranger. Yet he was different from them in several ways—older by two weeks, stronger, and marked on the neck and shoulders with what afterward grew to be a dark mane.

Little Duskymane could not have been happier in his choice of a foster-mother, for the Yellow Wolf was not only a good hunter with a fund of cunning, but she was a Wolf of modern ideas as well. The old tricks of tolling a Prairie Dog, relaying for Antelope, houghing a Bronco or flanking a Steer she had learned partly from instinct and partly from the example of her more experienced relatives, when they joined to form the winter bands. But, just as necessary nowadays, she had learned that

all men carry guns, that guns are irresistible, that the only way to avoid them is by keeping out of sight while the sun is up, and yet that at night they are harmless. She had a fair comprehension of traps, indeed she had been in one once, and though she left a toe behind in pulling free, it was a toe most advantageously disposed of; thenceforth, though not comprehending the nature of the trap, she was thoroughly imbued with the horror of it, with the idea indeed that iron is dangerous, and at any price it should be avoided.

On one occasion, when she and five others were planning to raid a Sheep-yard, she held back at the last minute because some new-strung wires appeared. The others rushed in to find the Sheep beyond their reach, themselves in a death-trap.

Thus she had learned the newer dangers, and while it is unlikely that she had any clear mental conception of them she had acquired a wholesome distrust of all things strange, and a horror of one or two in

particular that proved her lasting safeguard. Each year she raised her brood successfully and the number of Yellow Wolves increased in the country. Guns, traps, men and the new animals they brought had been learned, but there was yet another lesson before her—a terrible one indeed.

About the time Duskymane's brothers were a month old his foster-mother returned in a strange condition. She was frothing at the mouth, her legs trembled, and she fell in a convulsion near the doorway of the den, but recovering she came in. Her jaws quivered, her teeth rattled a little as she tried to lick the little ones; she seized her own front leg and bit it so as not to bite them, but at length she grew quieter and calmer. The Cubs had retreated in fear to a far pocket, but now they returned and crowded about her to seek their usual food. The mother recovered, but was very ill for two or three days, and those days with the poison in her system worked disaster for

the brood. They were terribly sick; only the strongest could survive, and when the trial of strength was over, the den contained only the old one and the Black-maned Cub, the one she had adopted. Thus little Duskymane became her sole charge; all her strength was devoted to feeding him, and he thrived apace.

Wolves are quick to learn certain things. The reactions of smell are the greatest that a Wolf can feel, and thenceforth both Cub and foster-mother experienced a quick, unreasoning sense of fear and hate the moment the smell of strychnine reached them.

IV

THE RUDIMENTS OF WOLF TRAINING

With the sustenance of seven at his service the little Wolf had every reason to grow, and when in the autumn he began to

follow his mother on her hunting trips he was as tall as she was. Now a change of region was forced on them, for numbers of little Wolves were growing up. Sentinel Butte, the rocky fastness of the plains, was claimed by many that were big and strong; the weaker must move out, and with them Yellow Wolf and the Dusky Cub.

Wolves have no language in the sense that man has; their vocabulary is probably limited to a dozen howls, barks, and grunts expressing the simplest emotions; but they have several other modes of conveying ideas, and one very special method of spreading information—the Wolf-telephone. Scattered over their range are a number of recognized "centrals." Sometimes these are stones, sometimes the angle of cross-trails, sometimes a Buffalo-skull—indeed, any conspicuous object near a main trail is used. A Wolf calling here, as a Dog does at a telegraph post, or a Muskrat at a certain mud-pie point, leaves his body-scent and learns what other visitors have been there

recently to do the same. He learns also whence they came and where they went, as well as something about their condition, whether hunted, hungry, gorged, or sick. By this system of registration a Wolf knows where his friends, as well as his foes, are to be found. And Duskymane, following after the Yellow Wolf, was taught the places and uses of the many signal-stations without any conscious attempt at teaching on the part of his foster-mother. Example, backed by his native instincts, was indeed the chief teacher, but on one occasion at least there was something very like the effort of a human parent to guard her child in danger.

The dark Cub had learned the rudiments of Wolf life: that the way to fight Dogs is to run, and to fight as you run, never grapple, but snap, snap, snap, and make for the rough country where Horses cannot bring their riders.

He learned not to bother about the Coyotes that follow for the pickings when

you hunt; you cannot catch them and they do you no harm.

He knew he must not waste time dashing after Birds that alight on the ground; and that he must keep away from the little black and white Animal with the bushy tail. It is not very good to eat, and it is very, very bad to smell.

Poison! Oh, he never forgot that smell from the day when the den was cleared of all his foster-brothers.

He now knew that the first move in attacking Sheep was to scatter them; a lone Sheep is a foolish and easy prey; that the way to round up a band of Cattle was to frighten a Calf.

He learned that he must always attack a Steer behind, a Sheep in front, and a Horse in the middle, that is, on the flank, and never, never attack a man at all, never even face him. But an important lesson was added to these, one in which the mother consciously taught him of a secret foe.

V

THE LESSON ON TRAPS

A CALF had died in branding-time and now, two weeks later, was in its best state for perfect taste, not too fresh, not over-ripe —that is, in a Wolf's opinion—and the wind carried this information afar. The Yellow Wolf and Duskymane were out for supper, though not yet knowing where, when the tidings of veal arrived, and they trotted up the wind. The Calf was in an open place, and plain to be seen in the moonlight. A Dog would have trotted right up to the carcass, an old-time Wolf might have done so, but constant war had developed constant vigilance in the Yellow Wolf, and trusting nothing and no one but her nose, she slacked her speed to a walk. On coming in easy view she stopped, and for long swung her nose, submitting the wind to the closest possible chemical analysis. She tried it

with her finest tests, blew all the membranes clean again and tried it once more; and this was the report of the trusty nostrils, yes, the unanimous report. First, rich and racy smell of Calf, seventy per cent.; smells of grass, bugs, wood, flowers, trees, sand, and other uninteresting negations, fifteen per cent.; smell of her Cub and herself, positive but ignorable, ten per cent.; smell of human tracks, two per cent.; smell of smoke, one per cent.; of sweaty leather smell, one per cent.; of human body-scent (not discernible in some samples), one-half per cent.; smell of iron, a trace.

The old Wolf crouched a little but sniffed hard with swinging nose; the young Wolf imitatively did the same. She backed off to a greater distance; the Cub stood. She gave a low whine; he followed unwillingly. She circled around the tempting carcass; a new smell was recorded—Coyote trail-scent, soon followed by Coyote body-scent. Yes, there they were sneaking along a near ridge, and now as she passed to one side the

samples changed, the wind had lost nearly every trace of Calf; miscellaneous, commonplace, and uninteresting smells were there instead. The human track-scent was as before, the trace of leather was gone, but fully one-half per cent. of iron-odour, and body-smell of man raised to nearly two per cent.

Fully alarmed, she conveyed her fear to the Cub, by her rigid pose, her air intent, and her slightly bristling mane.

She continued her round. At one time on a high place the human body-scent was doubly strong, then as she dropped it faded. Then the wind brought the full calf-odour with several track-scents of Coyotes and sundry Birds. Her suspicions were lulling as in a smalling circle she neared the tempting feast from the windward side. She had even advanced straight toward it for a few steps when the sweaty leather sang loud and strong again, and smoke and iron mingled like two strands of a parti-coloured yarn. Centring all her attention on this,

she advanced within two leaps of the Calf. There on the ground was a scrap of leather, telling also of a human touch, close at hand the Calf, and now the iron and smoke on the full vast smell of Calf were like a snake trail across the trail of a whole Beef herd. It was so slight that the Cub, with the appetite and impatience of youth, pressed up against his mother's shoulder to go past and eat without delay. She seized him by the neck and flung him back. A stone struck by his feet rolled forward and stopped with a peculiar clink. The danger smell was greatly increased at this, and the Yellow Wolf backed slowly from the feast, the Cub unwillingly following.

As he looked wistfully he saw the Coyotes drawing nearer, mindful chiefly to avoid the Wolves. He watched their really cautious advance; it seemed like heedless rushing compared with his mother's approach. The Calf smell rolled forth in exquisite and overpowering excellence now, for they were tearing the meat, when a sharp clank was

heard and a yelp from a Coyote. At the same time the quiet night was shocked with a roar and a flash of fire. Heavy shots spattered Calf and Coyotes, and yelping like beaten Dogs they scattered, excepting one that was killed and a second struggling in the trap set here by the ever-active wolvers. The air was charged with the hateful smells redoubled now, and horrid smells additional. The Yellow Wolf glided down a hollow and led her Cub away in flight, but, as they went, they saw a man rush from the bank near where the mother's nose had warned her of the human scent. They saw him kill the caught Coyote and set the traps for more.

VI

THE BEGUILING OF THE YELLOW WOLF

THE life game is a hard game, for we may win ten thousand times, and if we fail but once our gain is gone. How many hundred times had the Yellow Wolf scorned the traps; how many Cubs she had trained to do the same! Of all the dangers to her life she best knew traps.

October had come; the Cub was now much taller than the mother. The wolver had seen them once—a Yellow Wolf followed by another, whose long, awkward legs, big, soft feet, thin neck, and skimpy tail proclaimed him this year's Cub. The record of the dust and sand said that the old one had lost a right front toe, and that the young one was of giant size.

It was the wolver that thought to turn the carcass of the Calf to profit, but he was disappointed in getting Coyotes instead of Wolves. It was the beginning of the

trapping season, for this month fur is prime. A young trapper often fastens the bait on the trap; an experienced one does not. A good trapper will even put the bait at one place and the trap ten or twenty feet away, but at a spot that the Wolf is likely to cross in circling. A favourite plan is to hide three or four traps around an open place, and scatter some scraps of meat in the middle. The traps are buried out of sight after being smoked to hide the taint of hands and iron. Sometimes no bait is used except a little piece of cotton or a tuft of feathers that may catch the Wolf's eye or pique its curiosity and tempt it to circle on the fateful, treacherous ground. A good trapper varies his methods continually so that the Wolves cannot learn his ways. Their only safeguards are perpetual vigilance and distrust of all smells that are known to be of man.

The wolver, with a load of the strongest steel traps, had begun his autumn work on the "Cottonwood."

An old Buffalo trail crossing the river followed a little draw that climbed the hills to the level upland. All animals use these trails, Wolves and Foxes as well as Cattle and Deer: they are the main thoroughfares. A cottonwood stump not far from where it plunged to the gravelly stream was marked with Wolf signs that told the wolver of its use. Here was an excellent place for traps, not on the trail, for Cattle were here in numbers, but twenty yards away on a level, sandy spot he set four traps in a twelve-foot square. Near each he scattered two or three scraps of meat; three or four white feathers on a spear of grass in the middle completed the setting. No human eye, few animal noses, could have detected the hidden danger of that sandy ground, when the sun and wind and the sand itself had dissipated the man-track taint.

The Yellow Wolf had seen and passed, and taught her giant son to pass, such traps a thousand times before.

The Cattle came to water in the heat of

the day. They strung down the Buffalo path as once the Buffalo did. The little Vesper-birds flitted before them, the Cow-birds rode on them, and the Prairie-dogs chattered at them, just as they once did at the Buffalo.

Down from the gray-green mesa with its green-gray rocks, they marched with imposing solemnity, importance, and directness of purpose. Some frolicsome Calves, playing alongside the trail, grew sober and walked behind their mothers as the river flat was reached. The old Cow that headed the procession sniffed suspiciously as she passed the "trap set," but it was far away, otherwise she would have pawed and bellowed over the scraps of bloody beef till every trap was sprung and harmless.

But she led to the river. After all had drunk their fill they lay down on the nearest bank till late afternoon. Then their unheard dinner-gong aroused them, and started them on the backward march to where the richest pastures grew.

One or two small birds had picked at the scraps of meat, some bluebottle flies buzzed about, but the sinking sun saw the sandy mask untouched.

A brown Marsh Hawk came skimming over the river flat as the sun began his colour play. Blackbirds dashed into thickets, and easily avoided his clumsy pounce. It was too early for the Mice, but, as he skimmed the ground, his keen eye caught the flutter of feathers by the trap and turned his flight. The feathers in their uninteresting emptiness were exposed before he was near, but now he saw the scraps of meat. Guileless of cunning, he alighted and was devouring a second lump when—*clank*—the dust was flirted high and the Marsh Hawk was held by his toes, struggling vainly in the jaws of a powerful wolf-trap. He was not much hurt. His ample wings winnowed from time to time, in efforts to be free, but he was helpless, even as a Sparrow might be in a rat-trap, and when the sun had played his fierce chromatic scale, his swan-

song sung, and died as he dies only in the blazing west, and the shades had fallen on the melodramatic scene of the Mouse in the elephant-trap, there was a deep, rich sound on the high flat butte, answered by another, neither very long, neither repeated, and both instinctive rather than necessary. One was the muster-call of an ordinary Wolf, the other the answer of a very big male, not a pair in this case, but mother and son—Yellow Wolf and Duskymane. They came trotting together down the Buffalo trail. They paused at the telephone box on the hill and again at the old cottonwood root, and were making for the river when the Hawk in the trap fluttered his wings. The old Wolf turned toward him,—a wounded bird on the ground surely, and she rushed forward. Sun and sand soon burn all trail-scents; there was nothing to warn her. She sprang on the flopping bird and a chop of her jaws ended his troubles, but a horrid sound—the gritting of her teeth on steel—told her of peril. She

dropped the Hawk and sprang backward from the dangerous ground, but landed in the second trap. High on her foot its death-grip closed, and leaping with all her strength to escape, she set her fore foot in another of the lurking grips of steel. Never had a trap been so baited before. Never was she so unsuspicious. Never was catch more sure. Fear and fury filled the old Wolf's heart; she tugged and strained, she chewed the chains, she snarled and foamed. One trap with its buried log, she might have dragged; with two, she was helpless. Struggle as she might, it only worked those relentless jaws more deeply into her feet. She snapped wildly at the air; she tore the dead Hawk into shreds; she roared the short, barking roar of a crazy Wolf. She bit at the traps, at her cub, at herself. She tore her legs that were held; she gnawed in frenzy at her flank, she chopped off her tail in her madness; she splintered all her teeth on the steel, and filled her bleeding, foaming jaws with clay and sand.

She struggled till she fell, and writhed about or lay like dead, till strong enough to rise and grind the chains again with her teeth.

And so the night passed by.

And Duskymane? Where was he? The feeling of the time when his foster-mother had come home poisoned, now returned; but he was even more afraid of her. She seemed filled with fighting hate. He held away and whined a little; he slunk off and came back when she lay still, only to retreat again, as she sprang forward, raging at him, and then renewed her efforts at the traps. He did not understand it, but he knew this much: she was in terrible trouble; and the cause seemed to be the same as that which had scared them the night they had ventured near the Calf.

Duskymane hung about all night, fearing to go near, not knowing what to do, and helpless as his mother.

At dawn the next day a sheepherder seeking lost Sheep discovered her from a

neighbouring hill. A signal mirror called the wolver from his camp. Duskymane saw the new danger. He was a mere Cub, though so tall; he could not face the man, and fled at his approach.

The wolver rode up to the sorry, tattered, bleeding She-wolf in the trap. He raised his rifle and soon the struggling stopped.

The wolver read the trail and the signs about, and remembering those he had read before, he divined that this was the Wolf with the great Cub—the She-wolf of Sentinel Butte.

Duskymane heard the "crack" as he scurried off into cover. He could scarcely know what it meant, but he never saw his kind old foster-mother again. Thenceforth he must face the world alone.

VII

THE YOUNG WOLF WINS A PLACE AND FAME

Instinct is no doubt a Wolf's first and best guide, but gifted parents are a great start in life. The dusky-maned cub had had a mother of rare excellence and he reaped the advantage of all her cleverness. He had inherited an exquisite nose and had absolute confidence in its admonitions. Mankind has difficulty in recognizing the power of nostrils. A Gray-wolf can glance over the morning wind as a man does over his newspaper, and get all the latest news. He can swing over the ground and have the minutest information of every living creature that has walked there within many hours. His nose even tells which way it ran, and in a word renders a statement of every animal that recently crossed his

trail, whence it came, and whither it went.

That power had Duskymane in the highest degree; his broad, moist nose was evidence of it to all who are judges of such things. Added to this, his frame was of unusual power and endurance, and last, he had early learned a deep distrust of everything strange, and, call it what we will, shyness, wariness or suspicion, it was worth more to him than all his cleverness. It was this as much as his physical powers that made a success of his life. Might is right in wolf-land, and Duskymane and his mother had been driven out of Sentinel Butte. But it was a very delectable land and he kept drifting back to his native mountain. One or two big Wolves there resented his coming. They drove him off several times, yet each time he returned he was better able to face them; and before he was eighteen months old he had defeated all rivals and established himself again on

his native ground; where he lived like a robber baron, levying tribute on the rich lands about him and finding safety in the rocky fastness.

Wolver Ryder often hunted in that country, and before long, he came across a five-and-one-half-inch track, the foot-print of a giant Wolf. Roughly reckoned, twenty to twenty-five pounds of weight or six inches of stature is a fair allowance for each inch of a Wolf's foot; this Wolf, therefore, stood thirty-three inches at the shoulder and weighed about one hundred and forty pounds, by far the largest Wolf he had ever met. King had lived in Goat country, and now in Goat language he exclaimed: "You bet, ain't that an old Billy?" Thus by trivial chance it was that Duskymane was known to his foe, as "Badlands Billy."

Ryder was familiar with the muster-call of the Wolves, the long, smooth cry, but Billy's had a singular feature, a slurring that was always distinctive. Ryder had

heard this before, in the cottonwood cañon, and when at length he got a sight of the big Wolf with the black mane, it struck him that this was also the Cub of the old Yellow fury that he had trapped.

These were among the things he told me as we sat by the fire at night. I knew of the early days when any one could trap or poison Wolves, of the passing of those days, with the passing of the simple Wolves; of the new race of Wolves with new cunning that were defying the methods of the ranchmen, and increasing steadily in numbers. Now the wolver told me of the various ventures that Penroof had made with different kinds of Hounds: of Foxhounds too thin-skinned to fight; of Greyhounds that were useless when the animal was out of sight; of Danes too heavy for the rough country; and, last, of the composite pack with some of all kinds, including at times a Bull-terrier to lead them in the final fight.

He told of hunts after Coyotes, which usually were successful because the Coyotes sought the plains, and were easily caught by the Greyhounds. He told of killing some small Gray-wolves with this very pack, usually at the cost of the one that led them; but above all he dwelt on the wonderful prowess of "that thar cussed old Black Wolf of Sentinel Butte," and related the many attempts to run him down or corner him—an unbroken array of failures. For the big Wolf, with exasperating persistence, continued to live on the finest stock of the Penroof brand, and each year was teaching more Wolves how to do the same with perfect impunity.

I listened even as gold-hunters listen to stories of treasure trove, for these were the things of my world. These things indeed were uppermost in all our minds, for the Penroof pack was lying around our campfire now. We were out after Badlands Billy.

VIII

THE VOICE IN THE NIGHT AND THE BIG TRACK IN THE MORNING

One night late in September, after the last streak of light was gone from the west and the Coyotes had begun their yapping chorus, a deep, booming sound was heard. King took out his pipe, turned his head and said: "That's him—that's old Billy. He's been watching us all day from some high place, and now when the guns are useless he's here to have a little fun with us."

Two or three Dogs arose, with bristling manes, for they clearly recognized that this was no Coyote. They rushed out into the night, but did not go far; their brawling sounds were suddenly varied by loud yelps, and they came running back to the shelter of the fire. One was so badly cut in the shoulder that he was useless for the rest of

the hunt. Another was hurt in the flank —it seemed the less serious wound, and yet next morning the hunters buried that second Dog.

The men were furious. They vowed speedy vengeance, and at dawn were off on the trail. The Coyotes yelped their dawning song, but they melted into the hills when the light was strong. The hunters searched about for the big Wolf's track, hoping that the Hounds would be able to take it up and find him, but they either could not or would not.

They found a Coyote, however, and within a few hundred yards they killed him. It was a victory, I suppose, for Coyotes kill Calves and Sheep, but somehow I felt the common thought of all: "Mighty brave Dogs for a little Coyote, but they could not face the big Wolf last night."

Young Penroof, as though in answer to one of the unput questions, said:

"Say, boys, I believe old Billy had a

hull bunch of Wolves with him last night."

"Didn't see but one track," said King gruffly.

In this way the whole of October slipped by; all day hard riding after doubtful trails, following the Dogs, who either could not keep the big trail or feared to do so, and again and again we had news of damage done by the Wolf; sometimes a cowboy would report it to us; and sometimes we found the carcasses ourselves. A few of these we poisoned, though it is considered a very dangerous thing to do while running Dogs. The end of the month found us a weather-beaten, dispirited lot of men, with a worn-out lot of Horses, and a foot-sore pack, reduced in numbers from ten to seven. So far we had killed only one Gray-wolf and three Coyotes; Badlands Billy had killed at least a dozen Cows and Dogs at fifty dollars a head. Some of the boys decided to give it up and go home, so King

took advantage of their going, to send a letter, asking for reinforcements including all the spare Dogs at the ranch.

During the two days' wait we rested our Horses, shot some game, and prepared for a harder hunt. Late on the second day the new Dogs arrived—eight beauties—and raised the working pack to fifteen.

The weather now turned much cooler, and in the morning, to the joy of the wolvers, the ground was white with snow. This surely meant success. With cool weather for the Dogs and Horses to run; with the big Wolf not far away, for he had been heard the night before; and with tracking snow, so that once found he could not baffle us,—escape for him was impossible.

We were up at dawn, but before we could get away, three men came riding into camp. They were the Penroof boys back again. The change of weather had changed their minds; they knew that with snow we might have luck.

" Remember now," said King, as all were mounting, " we don't want any but Badlands Billy this trip. Get him an' we kin bust up the hull combination. It is a five-and-a-half-inch track."

And each measured off on his quirt handle, or on his glove, the exact five and a half inches that was to be used in testing the tracks he might find.

Not more than an hour elapsed before we got a signal from the rider who had gone westward. One shot : that means " Attention " ; a pause while counting ten, then two shots : that means " *Come on.*"

King gathered the Dogs and rode direct to the distant figure on the hill. All hearts beat high with hope, and we were not disappointed. Some small Wolf tracks had been found, but here at last was the big track, nearly six inches long. Young Penroof wanted to yell and set out at full gallop. It was like hunting a Lion ; it was like finding happiness long deferred. The

hunter knows nothing more inspiring than the clean-cut line of fresh tracks that is leading to a wonderful animal he has long been hunting in vain. How King's eye gleamed as he gloated over the sign!

IX

RUN DOWN AT LAST

It was the roughest of all rough riding. It was a far longer hunt than we had expected, and was full of little incidents, for that endless line of marks was a minute history of all that the big Wolf had done the night before. Here he had circled at the telephone box and looked for news; there he had paused to examine an old skull; here he had shied off and swung cautiously up wind to examine something that proved

to be an old tin can; there at length he had mounted a low hill and sat down, probably giving the muster-howl, for two Wolves had come to him from different directions, and they then had descended to the river flat where the Cattle would seek shelter during the storm. Here all three had visited a Buffalo skull; there they trotted in line; and yonder they separated, going three different ways, to meet—yes —here—oh, what a sight, a fine Cow ripped open, left dead and *uneaten*. Not to their taste, it seems, for see! within a mile is another killed by them. Not six hours ago, they had feasted. Here their trails scatter again, but not far, and the snow tells plainly how each had lain down to sleep. The Hounds' manes bristled as they sniffed those places. King had held the Dogs well in hand, but now they were greatly excited. We came to a hill whereon the Wolves had turned and faced our way, then fled at full speed,—so said the trail,—and now it was

clear that they had watched us from that hill, and were not far away.

The pack kept well together, because the Greyhounds, seeing no quarry, were merely puttering about among the other Dogs, or running back with the Horses. We went as fast as we could, for the Wolves were speeding. Up mesas and down coulees we rode, sticking closely to the Dogs, though it was the roughest country that could be picked. One gully after another, an hour and another hour, and still the threefold track went bounding on; another hour and no change, but interminable climbing, sliding, struggling, through brush and over boulders, guided by the far-away yelping of the Dogs.

Now the chase led downward to the low valley of the river, where there was scarcely any snow. Jumping and scrambling down hills, recklessly leaping dangerous gullies and slippery rocks, we felt that we could not hold out much longer; when on the

lowest, dryest level the pack split, some went up, some went down, and others straight on. Oh, how King did swear! He knew at once what it meant. The Wolves had scattered, and so had divided the pack. Three Dogs after a Wolf would have no chance, four could not kill him, two would certainly be killed. And yet this was the first encouraging sign we had seen, for it meant that the Wolves were hard pressed. We spurred ahead to stop the Dogs, to pick for them the only trail. But that was not so easy. Without snow here, and with countless Dog-tracks, we were foiled. All we could do was to let the Dogs choose, but keep them to a single choice.

Away we went as before, hoping, yet fearing that we were not on the right track. The Dogs ran well, very fast indeed. This was a bad sign, King said, but we could not get sight of the track because the Dogs overran it before we came.

After a two-mile run the chase led upward again in snow country; the Wolf was sighted, but to our disgust, we were on the track of the smallest one.

"I thought so," growled young Penroof. "Dogs was altogether too keen for a serious proposition. Kind o' surprised it ain't turned out a Jack-rabbit."

Within another mile he had turned to bay in a willow thicket. We heard him howl the long-drawn howl for help, and before we could reach the place King saw the Dogs recoil and scatter. A minute later there sped from the far side of the thicket a small Gray-wolf and a Black One of very much greater size.

"By golly, if he didn't yell for help, and Billy come back to help him; that's great!" exclaimed the wolver. And my heart went out to the brave old Wolf that refused to escape by abandoning his friend.

The next hour was a hard repetition of

the gully riding, but it was on the highlands where there was snow, and when again the pack was split, we strained every power and succeeded in keeping them on the big "five-fifty track," that already was wearing for me the glamour of romance.

Evidently the Dogs preferred either of the others, but we got them going at last. Another half-hour's hard work and far ahead, as I rose to a broad flat plain, I had my first glimpse of the Big Black Wolf of Sentinel Butte.

"Hurrah! Badlands Billy! Hurrah! Badlands Billy!" I shouted in salute, and the others took up the cry.

We were on his track at last, thanks to himself. The Dogs joined in with a louder baying, the Greyhounds yelped and made straight for him, and the Horses sniffed and sprang more gamely as they caught the thrill. The only silent one was the black-maned Wolf, and as I marked his size and power, and above all his long and massive

jaws, I knew why the Dogs preferred some other trail.

With head and tail low he was bounding over the snow. His tongue was lolling long; plainly he was hard pressed. The wolvers' hands flew to their revolvers, though he was three hundred yards ahead; they were out for blood, not sport. But an instant later he had sunk from view in the nearest sheltered cañon.

Now which way would he go, up or down the cañon? Up was toward his mountain, down was better cover. King and I thought "up," so pressed westward along the ridge. But the others rode eastward, watching for a chance to shoot.

Soon we had ridden out of hearing. We were wrong—the Wolf had gone down, but we heard no shooting. The cañon was crossable here; we reached the other side and then turned back at a gallop, scanning the snow for a trail, the hills for a moving form, or the wind for a sound of life.

"Squeak, squeak," went our saddle leathers, "puff—puff" our Horses, and their feet "ka-ka-lump, ka-ka-lump."

X

WHEN BILLY WENT BACK TO HIS MOUNTAIN

We were back opposite to where the Wolf had plunged, but saw no sign. We rode at an easy gallop, on eastward, a mile, and still on, when King gasped out, "Look at that!" A dark spot was moving on the snow ahead. We put on speed. Another dark spot appeared, and another, but they were not going fast. In five minutes we were near them, to find—three of our own Greyhounds. They had lost sight of the game, and with that their interest waned. Now

they were seeking us. We saw nothing there of the chase or of the other hunters. But hastening to the next ridge we stumbled on the trail we sought and followed as hard as though in view. Another cañon came in our path, and as we rode and looked for a place to cross, a wild din of Hounds came from its brushy depth. The clamour grew and passed up the middle.

We raced along the rim, hoping to see the game. The Dogs appeared near the farther side, not in a pack, but a long, straggling line. In five minutes more they rose to the edge, and ahead of them was the great Black Wolf. He was loping as before, head and tail low. Power was plain in every limb and double power in his jaws and neck, but I thought his bounds were shorter now, and that they had lost their spring. The Dogs slowly reached the upper level, and sighting him they broke into a feeble cry; they, too, were nearly spent. The Greyhounds saw the chase, and leaving us they scrambled

down the cañon and up the other side at impetuous speed that would surely break them down, while we rode, vainly seeking means of crossing.

How the wolver raved to see the pack lead off in the climax of the chase, and himself held up behind. But he rode and wrathed and still rode, up to where the cañon dwindled—rough land and a hard ride. As we neared the great flat mountain, the feeble cry of the pack was heard again from the south, then toward the high Butte's side, and just a trifle louder now. We reined in on a hillock and scanned the snow. A moving speck appeared, then others, not bunched, but in a straggling train, and at times there was a far faint cry. They were headed toward us, coming on, yes ! coming, but so slowly, for not one was really running now. There was the grim old Cow-killer limping over the ground, and far behind a Greyhound, and another, and farther still, the other Dogs in order of their speed, slowly,

gamely, dragging themselves on that pursuit. Many hours of hardest toil had done their work. The Wolf had vainly sought to fling them off. Now was his hour of doom, for he was spent; they still had some reserve. Straight to us for a time they came, skirting the base of the mountain, crawling.

We could not cross to join them, so held our breath and gazed with ravenous eyes. They were nearer now, the wind brought feeble notes from the Hounds. The big Wolf turned to the steep ascent, up a well-known trail, it seemed, for he made no slip. My heart went with him, for he had come back to rescue his friend, and a momentary thrill of pity came over us both, as we saw him glance around and drag himself up the sloping way, to die on his mountain. There was no escape for him, beset by fifteen Dogs with men to back them. He was not walking, but tottering upward; the Dogs behind in line were now doing a little better,

were nearing him. We could hear them gasping; we scarcely heard them bay—they had no breath for that; upward the grim procession went, circling a spur of the Butte and along a ledge that climbed and narrowed, then dropped for a few yards to a shelf that reared above the cañon. The foremost Dogs were closing, fearless of a foe so nearly spent.

Here in the narrowest place, where one wrong step meant death, the great Wolf turned and faced them. With fore-feet braced, with head low and tail a little raised, his dusky mane a-bristling, his glittering tusks laid bare, but uttering no sound that we could hear, he faced the crew. His legs were weak with toil, but his neck, his jaws, and his heart were strong, and—now all you who love the Dogs had better close the book—on—up and down—fifteen to one, they came, the swiftest first, and how it was done, the eye could scarcely see, but even as a stream of water pours on a rock to be

splashed in broken jets aside, that stream of Dogs came pouring down the path, in single file perforce, and Duskymane received them as they came. A feeble spring, a counter-lunge, a gash, and "Fango's down," has lost his foothold and is gone. Dander and Coalie close and try to clinch; a rush, a heave, and they are fallen from that narrow path. Blue-spot then, backed by mighty Oscar and fearless Tige—but the Wolf is next the rock and the flash of combat clears to show him there alone, the big Dogs gone; the rest close in, the hindmost force the foremost on—down—to their death. Slash, chop and heave, from the swiftest to the biggest, to the last, down—down—he sent them whirling from the ledge to the gaping gulch below, where rocks and snags of trunks were sharp to do their work.

In fifty seconds it was done. The rock had splashed the stream aside—the Penroof pack was all wiped out; and Badlands

Billy stood there, alone again on his mountain.

A moment he waited to look for more to come. There were no more, the pack was dead; but waiting he got his breath, then raising his voice for the first time in that fatal scene, he feebly gave a long yell of triumph, and scaling the next low bank, was screened from view in a cañon of Sentinel Butte.

We stared like men of stone. The guns in our hands were forgotten. It was all so quick, so final. We made no move till the Wolf was gone. It was not far to the place; we went on foot to see if any had escaped. Not one was left alive. We could do nothing—we could say nothing.

XI

THE HOWL AT SUNSET

A WEEK later we were riding the upper trail back of the Chimney Pot, King and I. "The old man is pretty sick of it," he said. "He'd sell out if he could. He don't know what's the next move."

The sun went down beyond Sentinel Butte. It was dusk as we reached the turn that led to Dumont's place, and a deep-toned rolling howl came from the river flat below, followed by a number of higher-pitched howls in answering chorus. We could see nothing, but we listened hard. The song was repeated, the hunting-cry of the Wolves. It faded, the night was stirred by another, the sharp bark and the short howl, the signal "Close in"; a

bellow came up, very short, for it was cut short.

And King as he touched his Horse said grimly: "That's him, he is out with the pack, an' thar goes another Beef."

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